

EDITORIAL ARTICLE.

THE ANNALS OF SURGERY, 1885-1904.

THE present issue of the ANNALS OF SURGERY completes the first twenty years of its publication. Its file presents now forty substantial volumes, through all of which, from No. I to No. XL, has worked the same editorial supervision, while the ideal of excellence both as to the scientific character of its contents and their typographical presentation, with which the Journal was inaugurated, has been continuously maintained.

Very singularly during all this time the ANNALS OF SURGERY has practically had the field to itself as far as journals in the English tongue were concerned; it is true that the general weeklies and monthlies have continued to publish many articles of a surgical nature that were of value and interest, and that other journals devoted to some aspects of surgery have from time to time appeared; gynæcological surgery, orthopædic surgery, and minor surgery and surgical technique have thus had organs, but in the wider domain of General Surgical Science and Practice in which the plans for the ANNALS OF SURGERY placed it, it has been permitted to pursue its own development without a rival. In other countries the production of a special surgical periodical literature has been much more marked during the same period. The special surgical journals of Germany, France, Russia, and Italy have become numerous and important. Their papers are of the highest value, and the work which they record may well stimulate the earnest emulation of surgeons everywhere.

The inauguration of the publication of the ANNALS OF SURGERY as a "Monthly Review of Surgical Science and Practice," as its title-page proclaimed, was due to the enterprise of a Western book publisher, Mr. James H. Chambers, of St. Louis, Missouri.

Interest always attaches to the beginning of things, if in their later development it has appeared that the things begun were of any importance, so, in view of the twenty years of history which this "Monthly Review" has since made and its increasing acceptance as a valued exponent of current surgical doctrine and effort, it may not be out of place to now record the circumstances attending its beginnings.

During the year 1883, the Anatomical and Surgical Society of Brooklyn, New York, had carried on the publication of a monthly periodical, with the title, *Annals of the Anatomical and Surgical Society*, in which addresses, papers, and discussions constituting the transactions of that Society were published. At the end of that year, this publication was continued; no longer, however, as a bulletin of the work of that particular Society, but upon more general lines, under the title of *Annals of Anatomy and Surgery*, under the proprietorship of Drs. Lewis S. Pilcher and George R. Fowler, who were also its editors. With much success and acceptability this journal continued to appear for three years. This was made possible, first, by the considerable interest which many surgeons in all parts of the United States were brought to take in the publication, and, second, by the familiarity with typographical affairs and efficiency as a business manager of Dr. James E. Pilcher, to whom the duties and responsibilities of publishing the magazine were referred. With the end of the year 1883, however, it appeared that it would be no longer possible to continue the further publication of the journal. Dr. James Pilcher had been commissioned as a medical officer in the United States Army, and had been sent to a distant post in the Northwest; Dr. Lewis Pilcher was sailing for Europe for a somewhat prolonged absence, and Dr. Fowler was burdened with other work which had to take precedence of editorial and publishing duties. Accordingly with the publication of the issue for January, 1884, the *Annals of Anatomy and Surgery* were suspended, without any thought upon the part of any of those who had been promoting its

publication of engaging in any similar work in the future. In London, however, during the following spring, during an after-dinner talk between Dr. Pilcher and the well-known senior surgeon, of the West London Hospital, Mr. Charles B. Keetley, the history of the *Annals of Anatomy and Surgery* was recited, and Mr. Keetley expressed the hope that at some time a more strictly surgical journal which should represent all English-speaking surgeons might be established, adding that he would gladly co-operate in such an enterprise. Without any plans or serious expectations along this line, Dr. Pilcher returned to New York the last of May, 1884. Awaiting his arrival in New York he found Mr. Chambers with a proposition for the establishment of a strictly surgical journal of the highest grade. That gentleman stated that he was satisfied there was a field for such a journal, that especially at the suggestion of Dr. Nicholas Senn and of Dr. Roswell Park, with whom he had consulted upon the matter, he was desirous of securing the co-operation of Dr. Pilcher in the editorial direction, and that he was willing to place in the hands of such editor the absolute control of the contents of such journal and a censorship over the advertising pages as well. During the ensuing summer further correspondence ended in the making of an agreement between Mr. Chambers and Dr. Pilcher on the lines of this first interview; the co-operation of Mr. Keetley, as a representative English surgeon, was unhesitatingly given when the proposition of the St. Louis publisher was communicated to him; a large number of the leaders in surgery in the United States and Great Britain were informed of the proposed publication, and without exception gave the enterprise their approval, and permitted the use of their names as endorsing it upon the title-page of the new journal; at the head of this list was the name of Lord Lister.

The first number of the new journal appeared January 1, 1885, and in regular succession it has continued to appear from that time to the present upon the first of each month. During the

earlier years abstracts and digests of the surgical literature of other lands formed a very important part of the contents of each number of the journal, but more recently, notwithstanding the increase in the number of pages of the journal to nearly twice their original number, the number of original contributions of value continually being offered for publication has become so great as to reduce to insignificance the abstract or "Index of Progress" department. This the Editor has seen occur with a distinct sense of loss on his part, for he had from the first felt that to bring first hand to the knowledge of English-speaking surgeons so much of the results of the work of able men published in other tongues was a function of no mean importance. During the seven years, 1885 to 1891 inclusive, the *ANNALS OF SURGERY* continued to be published at St. Louis by Mr. Chambers. It is probable, however, that the more sanguine and earlier expectations of the publisher as to the journal as a profitable business investment were slow in being realized. In the first place, such a journal was an expensive thing to publish, and the ideals of its editors prevented the introduction into it of a grade of surgical literature that might have made it appeal more strongly to the interest of large classes of medical men, while the location of its publication office in the West might possibly be considered as having a deterrent effect upon the extension of its subscription list among those to whom it expected to appeal for patronage, since a large proportion of these were to be found in the East. For this reason Mr. Chambers, after a number of years, offered the journal to Eastern publishers, and finally disposed of it to the University of Pennsylvania Press, by whom its publication was undertaken, beginning with January, 1892, and continued until June, 1897, when, upon the reorganization of that Association, the *ANNALS OF SURGERY* was transferred to the J. B. Lippincott Company, its present publishers. This then is the history of the origin of the *ANNALS OF SURGERY*. The forty volumes which now constitute its file show how well the editors have been able to carry out their

ideals, when it was inaugurated, that it should fully represent the highest attainments of current Surgical Science and Practice. They have been greatly helped in their endeavor by the fact that they were themselves active workers in the surgical field and were always in touch with their fellow-workers, whose needs and ideals they shared and kept in view in the shaping of each succeeding issue. While the chief burden of journalistic work has from the first been borne by Dr. Pilcher, nevertheless the assistance rendered by his collaborators has been frequent and most valuable. In Mr. Keetley, Mr. Treves, Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Cheyne, Dr. Macewen and Dr. White, the ANNALS has ever found wise counsellors, interested collaborators, and valuable contributors.

While the ANNALS may be said to have been a mirror of contemporaneous surgery, it may be claimed that it has been something more than a mirror to passively reflect what was brought before it. Surely it has exerted a very active influence in moulding surgical thought and directing surgical endeavor as each month it has brought to thousands of active surgeons the record of the methods, achievements, and theories of many of their fellows. In the selection of that which it should present, its influence has always been on the side of reason, of practicability, and of sanity.

The past twenty years has witnessed a wide diffusion of trained surgical knowledge and experience. No longer is special skill limited to a few men in great centres, but everywhere, in State and town and colony, are to be found men of thorough training, of hospital experience, skilled in aseptic technique, with knowledge of pathology and diagnosis and practice, who have arrived on the professional scene since the ANNALS OF SURGERY began to do its work. It is into the hands of these men, products and exponents of the new surgery, that the surgical work of the world has either already or will soon come. To record their achievements during the coming twenty years will be a task equally calculated to elicit an editor's enthusiasm as have the conditions of 1885 to 1904.